

Life is queer with its twists and turns,
As every one of us sometimes learns,
And many a failure turns about,
When he might have won had he stuck it out;
Don't give up though the pace seems slow--
You may succeed with another blow.

A single competition was what it took to change my life. It taught me not to give up, and to keep persevering because giving up is regret too great to live with.

Towards the end of my Secondary 1 year, I was given a chance to participate in the bi-annual Campcraft Competition. I was overjoyed when I qualified for the team. Little did I know, joining the team was the start of an arduous journey filled with lots of expectations and disappointments.

Intensive trainings started in December. Trainings were demoralizing as we were scolded every single time. Things only worsened when Secondary 2 life started. There was added pressure, expectations, stress and I wanted to give up the competition during that depressing period.

One day, my vice-captain gave the team a simple word of encouragement: Do not give up, lest you betray yourself with regret.

That single sentence made me reflect. I realised that my teammates were all going through similarly difficult situations. I also remembered that it had been my dream to represent the school at the competition. I had sacrificed so much and strived so hard for what I had wanted to achieve. If everything came to naught because I did not persevere, it would become a great regret. Furthermore, I had my teammates to provide mutual support and encouragement. Any thoughts of giving up were distinguished.

With the renewed drive and motivation to succeed, I poured my heart, soul and strength into trainings. Working towards our goal as a team, no one complained, because we all knew that giving up was not an option. There was no longer any reason for us to quit, or turn back, but every reason to carry on striving for our goal.

Our team eventually clinched the 7th position. We might not have won, but we had given our all and had not left any regrets. The tears and the laughter; the trainings in the pouring rain, the scolding we endured; the injuries we bore, all these came to create a most wonderful and beautiful memory.

Success is failure turned inside out--
The silver tint of the clouds of doubt,
And you never can tell how close you are,
It may be near when it seems so far,
So stick to the fight when you're hardest hit--
It's when things seem worst that you must not quit.

When you've reached the end of the rope, tie a knot and hang on. No matter what, don't give up. This I believe.